

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

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TAGS: TECH, MX

SUBJECT: MEXICO'S NUCLEAR POWER PLANS FOR NEXT 32 YEARS

VIENNA FOR US/IAEA

1. SUMMARY: NATIONAL PATRIMONY SECRETARY FRANCISCO JAVIER ALEJO ANNOUNCED SUNDAY, MARCH 9 THAT GOM HAS DECIDED TO USE NUCLEAR POWER PREFERENTIALLY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ITS ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY. PRESENT PLANS PROJECT TO THE YEAR 2007 HE SAID AND, COOPRDINATED WITH OTHER LA COUNTRIES, ARE DESIGNED TO MAKE MEXICO INDEPENDENT IN NUCLEAR FUEL FOR HER POWER PLANTS. JUST EXACTLY WHAT TECHNOLOGIES WILL BE UTILIZED HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED. END SUMMARY.

2. SECRETARY ALEJO MADE THIS ANNOUNCEMENT AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE FIRST NATIONAL ENGINEERING FORUM WITH SOME 5000 ENGINEERS.. PRESENT.

3. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE NEEDS OF MEXICO, ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL ALONE FOR NUCLEAR FUEL DURING THE NEXT 15 YEARS WOULD AMPLY JUSTIFY THE INVESTMENTS NEEDED TO SET UP AN INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX CAPABLE OF PRODUCING ENRICHED URANIUM.

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4. ALEJO ADDED THAT DECISIONS IN THE AREA OF NUCLEAR POWER PRODUCTION CAN NO LONGER BE POSTPONED IN THE HOPE THAT A NEW TECHNOLOGY MIGHT APPEAR ON THE SCENE BECAUSE THE ALTERNATIVE IS "EITHER HAVE SUFFICIENT ELECTRICAL ENERGY OR EXHAUST PETROLEUM RESOURCES AHEAD OF THE DATE FORESEEN."

5. AT THE END OF THE PRESENT SIX YEAR PRESIDENTIAL PERIOD (1976) HE SAID THAT THE CFE WILL HAVE DOUBLED ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION AND LAID GROUNDWORK FOR TRIPLING THE SAME, REFERRING TO PLANTS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT LAGUNA VERDE, VALLE DE MEXICO, ALTAMIRA, DOS BOCAS, GOMES PALACIO, RIO ESCONDIDO, MAZATLAN, CAMPECHE, CHICOASEN, AGOSTURA, MALPASO, PENITAS, TAMASCAL, WHICH WHEN COMPLETED, WILL GENERATE MORE THAN 20,000 MWE. TOTAL INVESTMENT THROUGH YEAR 2007, WILL BE OF THE ORDER OF 195 BILLION PESOS, SOME 15.6 BILLION U.S. DOLLARS.

6. CFE HEAD FARRELL ON SAME PROGRAM ANNOUNCED THAT CFE, USING MODEL CONSTRUCTED BY IN-HOUSE ENGINEERS IS STARTING A TIDAL ENERGY RESEARCH PROGRAM IN COOPERATION WITH THE NAVY. MEANWHILE "NUCLEOELECTRIC AND GEOTHERMAL PROJECTS (BRAS) WILL BE CONTINUED." REFERENCE ALSO MADE TO SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT PLANS, NO DETAILS GIVEN.

7. FARRELL ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THERE WILL BE NO INCREASES IN RATES FOR ELECTRICITY.

8. COMMENT: (A) IT SIGNIFICANT THAT BOTH MAJOR GOM ENERGY SOURCES, CFE AND PEMEX, ARE PART OF SEPANAL (SECRETARIAT OF NATIONAL PATRIMONY.). (B) EMBASSY NOT SURE ALEJO'S STATEMENT RE POSTPONEMENT (NO. 4 ABOVE) MAY BE INTERPRETED AS TELLING CFE TO GET GOING AND STOP DELAYING THE LAGUNA VERDE COMPLEX, BUT IT SOUNDS THAT WAY.
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